

JONES LAKE STATE PARK

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Division of Parks and Recreation

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JONES LAKE STATE PARK GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

Planning is an essential element of effective and efficient park administration and management. The North Carolina General Assembly acknowledged its importance by passing state parks system legislation that includes planning requirements.

The 1987 State Parks Act (G.S.114-44.7 through 114-44.14) stipulates that a State Parks System Plan be prepared. The first plan was completed in December 1988. It evaluated the statewide significance of each park, identified duplications and deficiencies in the system, described the resources of the system, proposed solutions to problems, described anticipated trends, and recommended means and methods to accommodate trends. The most recent update of the Systemwide Plan was completed in December 2000.

The State Parks Act also requires each park to have an individual general management plan. The general management plans are required to:

...include a statement of purpose for the park based upon its relationship to the System Plan and its classification. An analysis of the major resources and facilities on hand to achieve those purposes shall be completed along with a statement of management direction. The general management plan shall be revised as necessary to comply with the System Plan and to achieve the purpose of the [State Parks Act].

The general management plan (GMP) is to be a comprehensive five-year plan of management for a park unit. A GMP's function is to:

1. Describe park resources and facilities;
2. State the purpose and importance of each park unit;
3. Outline interpretive themes and propose locations for informational and interpretive facilities;
4. Analyze park and recreation demands and trends in the park's service area;
5. Summarize the primary laws guiding park operations;
6. Identify internal and external threats to park natural and cultural resources, and propose appropriate responses;
7. Identify and set priorities for capital improvement needs;
8. Analyze visitor services and propose efficient, effective, and appropriate means of responding to visitor needs; and
9. Review park operations and identify actions to support efficient and effective park administrative procedures.

The GMP for Jones Lake State Park, developed with public involvement, is intended to serve these purposes.

I. DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF JONES LAKE STATE PARK

LOCATION AND ACCESS

Jones Lake State Park is located in Bladen County, four miles north of Elizabethtown on Highway 242. To reach the park from Wilmington, drive west on US 74/76. Turn right onto NC 87 and travel north toward Elizabethtown. Turn right onto NC 87 Business. At the second light, turn right onto US 701. Travel north for one mile and take a left onto NC 53. Take an immediate right onto NC 242 and drive north for two miles. The park entrance, indicated by a large sign, will be on the left (Figure I-1).

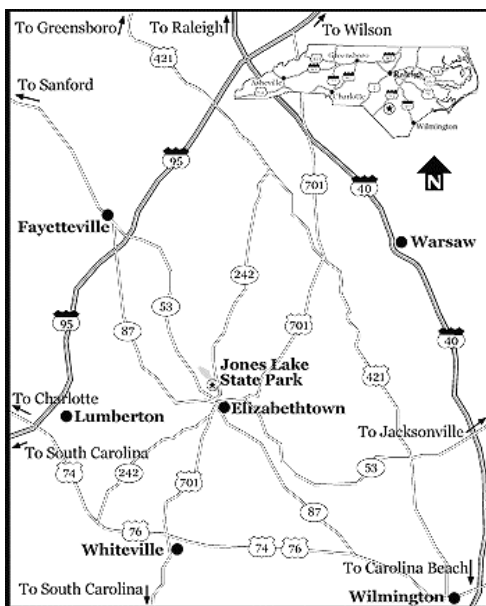


Figure I-1. Jones Lake Area Map

To arrive at Jones Lake from Fayetteville, drive east on NC 53 for approximately 40 miles. Turn left onto NC 242 and travel north for two miles. The park entrance, on the left, is marked with a large sign.

The park's mailing address, telephone numbers and email address are:

Jones Lake State Park
4117 NC 242 Hwy. North
Elizabethtown, N.C. 28337-4975

Office (910) 588-4550
Office (910) 588-4320

Jones.Lake@ncmail.net

PARK LAND

Jones Lake State Park consists of 2,208 acres that includes the 224-acre Jones Lake and nearby Salters Lake, 315 acres in size. Both of the lakes are Carolina bays, elliptical depressions found primarily in the coastal plain of the southeastern United States. Called bays because of the sweet bay, loblolly bay and red bay trees found growing in and around them, most Carolina bays are small – less than 500 feet long – and no longer contain open water. Instead, over time the lakes have filled with wet organic soils and become overgrown with pocosin vegetation.

Both Jones and Salters bays contain open water. The Jones Lake bay is approximately 8,000 feet long, and Jones Lake has a shoreline of 2.2 miles. Both lakes have a raised sand rim around their southeastern shores. The lakes are fed by precipitation, and the shallow water is highly acidic and contains few plant nutrients. Although water quality is

excellent, the water is dark colored due to decomposing plant matter, called peat, found on the lake bottom.

Jones Lake State Park has diverse natural communities with typical bay vegetation. Evergreens, including sweet bay, loblolly bay and red bay, are predominant. Because the bog around the lake, also called a pocosin, has poor drainage and is subject to flooding



and drought, the area has few herbaceous plants. Sheep laurel, blueberry and fetterbush thrive in the acidic soil. Pond pine and Atlantic white cedar are common in the bay forest. These trees usually do not reproduce in such shaded areas, but natural fires have burned the underbrush, allowing their growth. Today, prescribed burning is essential for the perpetuation of these communities. Without fire, the character of these vegetative communities would eventually change.

Figure I-2. Sunset at Jones Lake

Bladen Lakes State Forest lands surround the state park lands and are intensively managed for timber production. Most of state forest lands are also state gamelands managed for hunting by the Wildlife Resources Commission.

VISITOR FACILITIES

Jones Lake State Park recreational facilities are clustered around the 224-acre Jones Lake (Figure I-4). A shallow-water swimming area and sandy beach allow enjoyment of the cool and clean, tea-colored water. A pier provides access for swimming. For visitor convenience, a concession stand and bathhouse are located nearby. Canoes and paddleboats may be rented from Memorial Day through Labor Day at the boathouse adjacent to the pier. For visitors bringing their own watercraft, a road to the lake allows small craft with motors ten horsepower or less to be launched. Nearby hiking trails offer an opportunity to experience the habitats of a Carolina bay.



Figure I-3. Jones Lake Picnic Shelter

While few fish species are present due to the water's acidity, fishing is nonetheless popular. A fishing pier may be accessed from the lake trail, not far from the campground.

More than 50 tables and eight grills are available adjacent to the lake for picnicking. A large picnic shelter accommodates up to 150 people, while six small shelters accommodate families and small groups.

Jones Lake State Park has 20 campsites for tent and trailer camping. Each wooded site is equipped with a picnic table and grill. Drinking water and restrooms with showers are located nearby. One of the campsites has electrical and water hookups and is available for

both tents and recreational vehicles. The park, however, does not offer a dump station for recreational vehicles.

A primitive group campsite, available for organized groups of 20 people or less, is open year round. The site includes a fire circle and grill, picnic tables, benches and a pit toilet. Water is also available. The site is available by reservation only, and reservations must be made at least one week in advance.

A visitor's center was recently constructed, opening in July 2005. The center houses administrative offices and includes space for environmental education programs and exhibits for learning about the park.

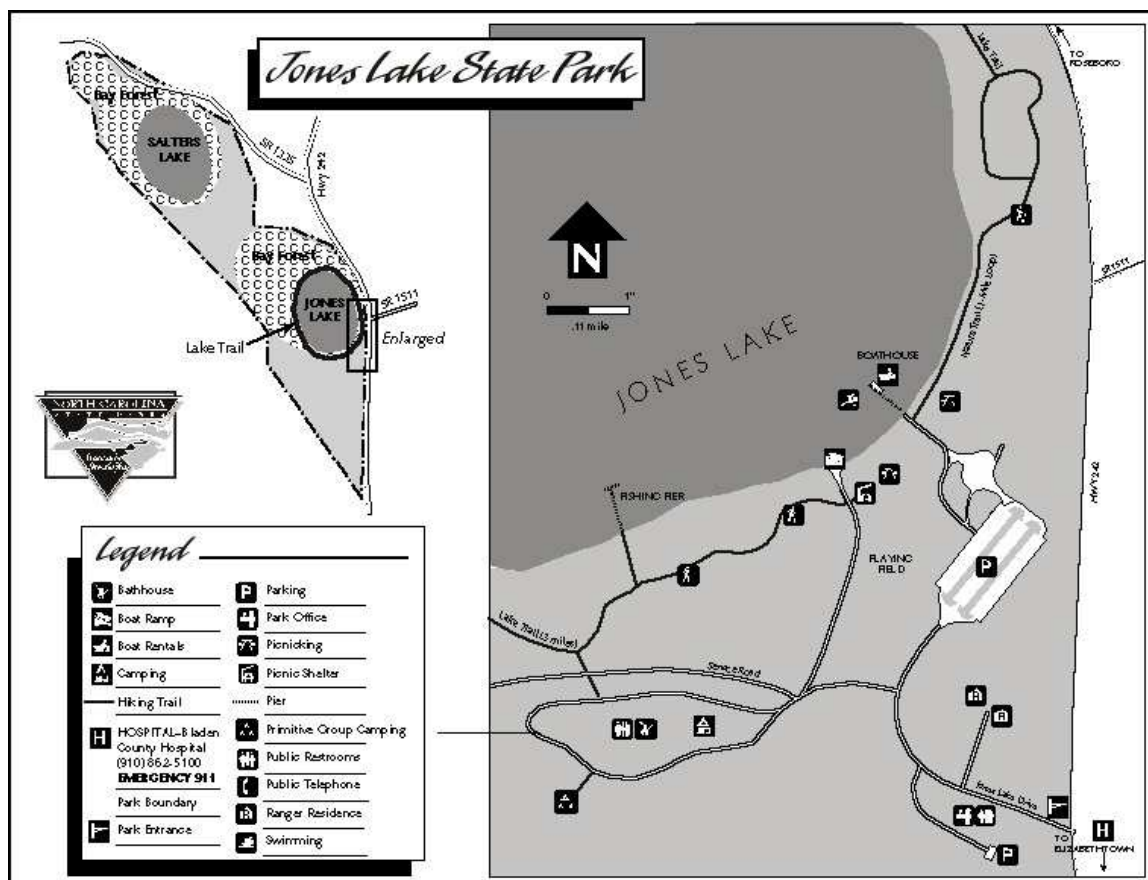


Figure I-4. Jones Lake State Park

HISTORY OF JONES LAKE

Jones Lake State Park is located in an area of sandy sediment derived from the Cape Fear River. The terrace on which the park lies is of the Upper Pleistocene age (Soller, 1988). The sediments on the surface of the land have been shaped and reshaped by wind action into a gently undulating sandy surface. Geologists, by studying pollen grains, have determined that the bays in the Bladen County area of North Carolina were formed about 40,000 years ago.

The Bladen Lakes area contains one of the largest concentrations of Carolina bays. These elliptical, southeast-northwest oriented depressions are found scattered over much of the Coastal Plain of North Carolina and South Carolina. Scientists have long wondered about the origin of the Carolina bays. Many hypotheses have been proposed, including underground springs, wind and wave action, dissolution of subsurface minerals and meteor showers. The oriented lakes theory (wind and wave action) is best supported by scientific evidence. Over many years, most of these shallow bays have filled in with sediment and vegetation (N.C. Geological Survey, 1989). Jones and Salters lakes are examples of Carolina bays that are still water filled.

The bay lakes region of Bladen County was settled during colonial times, primarily by Highland Scots who came to the Cape Fear River Valley seeking religious freedom. Bladen County, formed in 1734 from New Hanover County, was originally a huge area. Of the 100 counties now in North Carolina, 55 were once a part of Bladen County (Elizabethtown-White Lake Area Chamber of Commerce). Although it has been greatly reduced in size, Bladen County remains North Carolina's fourth largest county.

Jones Lake was known as Woodward's Lake for Samuel Woodward, a justice of the peace in 1734. The lake was probably later renamed for Isaac Jones, an adjacent landowner on whose land Elizabethtown, the county seat, was established in 1773 (Powell, 1968).

Salters Lake received its name from Sallie Salter, a Revolutionary War heroine who spied on the Tories encamped at Elizabethtown. Salter was a member of one of the most influential families in the Cape Fear River area of Bladen County. Her spying helped lead to the defeat of the Tories on August 28, 1781 at the Battle of Elizabethtown, where 70 Whigs under the command of Colonel Thomas Robeson defeated a force of 400 Tories and struck a blow for liberty (Elizabethtown-White Lake Area Chamber of Commerce).

For approximately 100 years after the area was settled, landowners practiced farming along the river lowlands and creek bottoms. Settlers in the bay lakes region generally led lives of marginal subsistence. Longleaf pines, then prolific in the area, were used for the production of naval stores, primarily providing turpentine, pitch and timber. These products were critical for building and maintaining sailing vessels of the period. As rivers were then the most effective means of transportation, naval stores and other products were rafted down the Cape Fear River to the port of Wilmington. Many longleaf pine trees in the park still carry the marks of the turpentiners who hacked the trees.

Statewide interest in the Carolina bay lakes emerged in the 1820s. During the 1827-1828 legislature, a bill was passed that made it unlawful for anyone to record for private ownership the lands covered by the waters of any lake within North Carolina. The law followed the limitation of the private recording of unappropriated marsh or swamplands that had been enacted during the previous legislature (*State Lakes Master Plan*, 1977). Some such lands and waters held by the state were then sold by the state over the years to raise funds for education.

Recognizing North Carolina's lakes as public resources belonging to the people, the General Assembly of 1911 passed legislation prohibiting private ownership of land covered by lake waters. The legislation directed that:

White Lake, Black Lake, Waccamaw Lake, and any other lake in Bladen, Columbus, or Cumberland counties containing 500 acres or more shall never be sold or conveyed to any person, firm or corporation, but shall always be and remain the property of the State of North Carolina for the use and benefit of all the people of the State. (Chapter 8, G.S. 7544)

Additional legislation passed in 1929 designated North Carolina lakes of 50 acres or more as state property never to be sold. Both the 224-acre Jones Lake and the 315-acre Salters Lake were state owned lakes at that time, so the legislation assured that both lakes would remain state lakes unless the North Carolina General Statutes were changed by subsequent legislative action.

The area's population grew along with the turpentine, lumber and cotton industries. Due to unsustainable practices of these industries, the land began to lose its capacity to support the population by providing the resources for industry. To make matters worse, the country entered the Great Depression. By 1935, with the fall of the cotton farmer and the contraction of industry, large segments of the population found themselves on submarginal land (*State Lakes Master Plan*, 1977).

Because of economic circumstances and trying times during the Great Depression, in the 1930s the federal government established various conservation programs in order to create jobs. Millions of dollars were poured into conservation. In North Carolina, the state parks system benefited greatly from federal assistance programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration. Jones Lake, Morrow Mountain, Hanging Rock, Cape Hatteras (now a national seashore), Singletary Lake, Pettigrew, and Umstead state parks were established and greatly benefited from these Depression era public works programs. The state's fiscal participation in the development of the state parks system prior to and during this period of time was minimal (*Eighth Biennial Report*, 1940).

The Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937 authorized the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to develop a program of land conservation and utilization. Under the Act and working cooperatively with state authorities, the federal government purchased approximately 35,544 acres of submarginal farmlands and other properties in the Bladen County area at an average cost of \$4.51 an acre (U.S. Department of Agriculture). Called the Bladen Lakes Land Use Area, the acquired acreage included land around Jones and Salters lakes as well as Singletary Lake. Not all local landowners wanted to sell their

property, necessitating the acquisition of 51 parcels totaling 9,376 acres via condemnation judgments (Bladen County, 1954).

The federal agency for the acquisition and development of submarginal land areas, begun in 1934, later became the Resettlement Administration, and this agency managed the Bladen Lakes Land Use area from 1936-1939. In order to stimulate the depressed local economy, a program of land conservation and associated development began (*Eighth Biennial Report*, 1940). In 1936, the National Park Service working with the state created a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in the area to provide emergency work for the depressed area (*State Lakes Master Plan*, 1977). Very little commercial timber remained on the acquired lands so reforestation was undertaken and some roads constructed. From the beginning of the project, it was generally expected that these lands would be eventually turned over to the state to be administered as state forests (*Seventh Biennial Report*, 1938). Using Civilian Conservation Corps laborers and local residents (Claridge, 1958) and materials, the Resettlement Administration oversaw construction of a large bathhouse, beach and swim area, boathouse with rental boats, refreshment stand and picnic grounds.

The 1937 General Assembly passed Chapter 228, an act to empower the Department of Conservation and Development to acquire by purchase or by the power of eminent domain lands within two miles of Jones and Singletary lakes. The Resettlement Administration requested the measure so that areas that the federal government had been unable to acquire through private purchase could be acquired. The Resettlement Administration as then organized was unable to condemn the land. Acquisition of certain areas was essential to establish the swimming beach at Jones Lake. The bill appropriated \$10,000 for such purposes. Shortly thereafter, the federal government purchased the tracts that the state acquired via condemnation, reimbursing the state for much of the land costs, and the land became part of the Jones and Salters Lakes Project (*Seventh Biennial Report*, 1938).



Figure I-5. Visitors at the Concession Stand

In January 1937, the Resettlement Administration became a bureau of the Department of Agriculture. After other reorganizations, the Land Utilization Division was transferred in October 1938 to the Soil Conservation Service, headquartered in Atlanta. It was through this bureau of the Department of Agriculture that the transfer of responsibility to the state for the administration of the Bladen Lakes Land Use Area was made in 1939 (*Eighth Biennial Report*, 1940).



Figure I-6. Jones Lake about 1942

The state leased the federal lands and established Jones Lake State Park, the first state park for Negroes. Both Jones and Salters lakes were included in the park. The park opened to the public July 1, 1939, and “...achieved an immediate popularity which clearly demonstrated the need for outdoor recreational facilities for Negroes.” Users came from distant places such as Greensboro and Winston-Salem as well as eastern North Carolina, arriving in “...private cars, taxis, trucks, and trailers equipped with



Figure I-7. Arrival at Jones Lake

church pews. Groups of several hundred were common.” Approximately 22,000 visitors came between the park’s opening and September 17 when seasonal operations ended. Paid admissions to the bathhouse numbered 4370, and many visitors that did not pay to use the bathhouse used the lake and beach. Boats were rented a total of 710 hours, and picnicking was also a popular activity. The concession was heavily used. The Department of Conservation and Development attributed part of the success of the first season to the “...policy of employing Negro personnel” (*Eighth Biennial Report*, 1940).

The Division of Forestry of the Department of Conservation and Development assumed responsibility for the leased property, in accordance with the terms of the lease agreement and with the state law providing for its acceptance (Chapter 226, Public Laws of 1935). The lease required the state to use the leased property for forestry, wildlife and recreational purposes and to operate, maintain, and administer the existing and any future recreational facilities for the use and benefit of the general public (*Eighth Biennial Report*, 1940). Another state park unit, Singletary Lake Group Camp, also opened in the summer of 1939, and the first state forest was created; both were established using Bladen Lakes Land Use Area lands, and both benefited from work undertaken by the Civilian Conservation Corps.



Figure I-8. Pier and Swimming Beach

Jones Lake Recreational Area continued to be popular, with summer attendance increasing from 25,000 in 1940 to 38,000 in 1941 even though no additional facilities were constructed. With the advent of World War II, the federal public works programs and their construction and development activities in the state parks system stopped almost entirely. Gas and tire rationing during the war limited the ability of people to travel, so state park visitation dropped significantly. Trained personnel were lost to military service and some operations were curtailed, although all of the state parks and recreational areas were kept open (*Ninth Biennial Report*, 1942).

During World War II, Jones Lake was kept open for picnicking and fishing, with special permit camping by the Boy Scouts. Recreation programs for Negro soldiers were arranged, and the Anti-Aircraft School from Camp Davis also used the area for special training programs both day and night (*Tenth Biennial Report*, 1944). Because of the war and the polio epidemic in the summer of 1944, visitation dropped across the state parks system and activities were reduced. Once gasoline rationing was lifted in August 1945, a sharp increase in use and attendance at state parks – including Jones Lake - resulted (*Eleventh Biennial Report*, 1946).

Most of the land area at Jones Lake State Park consisted of bog-bay and swamp forest, so from the start development potential at the park has been very limited. The park's high ground occurs on the sand rim surrounding Jones Lake and the rolling sand dunes on the east side of Salters Lake. Recreational facilities at Jones Lake proved inadequate to meet public demand. No facilities were provided for camping, and the temporary picnic facilities were insufficient. To address these needs, \$30,000 was allotted to Jones Lake from the 1947 appropriation to make repairs and improvements to the recreational facilities (*Twelfth Biennial Report*, 1948). In 1948 several facilities were constructed with funds from the appropriation: a large picnic shelter with a fireplace at each end; a

2037 square foot boathouse used to house rental boats; a campground washhouse; a shop/maintenance building; and an 1803 square foot park office and barracks building. All the facilities constructed in 1948 were still in use in 2005.



Figure I-9. Fun at the Swimming Beach

The Division of State Parks was established in 1948 and assumed responsibility for management of Jones Lake State Park. In October 1954, the leased park land was given to the state by the federal government. The deed requires that the land be used for public purposes, and, if at any time the land ceases to be used for such purposes, ownership would revert to the United States.

By the early 1960s, the original frame bathhouse constructed in the late 1930s badly needed replacing, and the General Assembly of 1963 appropriated funds for that purpose. In 1965, Jones Lake received a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) matching grant of almost \$23,000 to demolish the old bathhouse and construct a new one, roads and parking (U.S. Department of the Interior). After 36 years of service to Jones Lake visitors, the second bathhouse was demolished in 2003. By virtue of receiving LWCF assistance, the park is subject to LWCF regulations that require, among other things, that the park be retained and used for public outdoor recreation.

After civil rights advances, the park – as well as all other North Carolina state parks - became fully integrated in 1966. In 1969, a new concession stand was added to the park for the convenience of park visitors. The facility - conveniently located to the bathhouse, lakeside picnic area and the pier - consisted of an enclosed storage area, a covered deck for the public, and a raised public terrace (Ballard, McKim and Sawyer, 1969). The 1969 concession building has also been demolished.

In 2004 construction began on a park visitor's center, concession and bathhouse facility,



Figure I-10. Jones Lake Visitor's Center

and renovation of the 1948 boathouse. The visitor's center includes an auditorium, exhibits focusing on the park's history and natural resources, classroom space for interpretation and environmental education, and administrative offices. The visitor's center, concession and bathhouse, and renovated boathouse opened in July 2005.

Ballard, McKim and Sawyer, AIA Architects. *Final Report*. July 25, 1969.

Bladen County, North Carolina. Deed between the United States of America, Grantor, and the State of North Carolina, Grantee. November 17, 1954.

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II. PARK PURPOSES

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE STATE PARKS SYSTEM

The North Carolina state parks system exists for the enjoyment, education, health, and inspiration of all our citizens and visitors. The mission of the state parks system is to conserve and protect representative examples of the natural beauty, ecological features and recreation resources of statewide significance; to provide outdoor recreation opportunities in a safe and healthy environment; and to provide education opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural heritage.

JONES LAKE STATE PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT

The 224-acre Jones Lake and the 315-acre Salters Lake have a long history of public ownership. In 1827, legislation passed the General Assembly that expressly forbid the lands covered by the waters of any lake within North Carolina from being recorded for private ownership. In 1929, the General Assembly passed legislation declaring that all lakes greater than 50 acres in size belonging to the state should never be sold but always retained for the use and benefit of all the people of the state, thus clearly indicating the public trust nature of such lands and waters.

Because of the Great Depression, during the 1930s the federal government established various conservation programs in order to create jobs. As a result, approximately 35,000 acres of submarginal farmlands and other properties in the Bladen County area, including the land around Jones and Salters lakes, were purchased. Under management of the Resettlement Administration from 1936-1939, recreational facilities were constructed at Jones Lake. In July of 1939, the state leased the federal lands and established the first North Carolina state park for Negroes that included Jones and Salters lakes. After civil rights advances, the park became fully integrated in 1966. In October of 1954, the federal government gave the land that was being leased to the state. The deed requires that the land be used for public purposes.

Carolina bays are geological formations that are found in the loose, unconsolidated sands that form a cover within the Atlantic Coastal Plain, with the greatest concentration of Carolina bays in Bladen County. Their origin has long been a matter of speculation and debate. Carolina bays are shallow, oval depressions oriented in a southeast-northwest direction. Jones and Salters lakes are classic examples of water-filled Carolina bays. Both bays have a shallow bottom with the deepest point southeast of the bay's center. Both have a raised sand rim, best developed at the southeast end. The shorelines vary from sand to peat. Peat deposits also surround the lakes and fill the non-lake remainder of the bays. The term "bay," in this case, refers to the distinctive vegetation – such as loblolly bay – that slowly fills these depressions. Only a few bays still contain water, as most have filled naturally with sediment and vegetation.

The park's outstanding biologic resources include high quality aquatic and shoreline communities typical of bay lakes, such as Xeric Sandhill Scrub, Wet Pine Flatwoods, Pond Pine Woodland, High and Low Pocosin, Atlantic White Cedar Forest, and Natural Lake Shoreline. The Jones Lake Registered Natural Heritage Area includes almost the entire park, including Jones and Salters lakes. Species of special interest include white wicky (*Kalmia cuneata*) and red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*).

Jones Lake State Park is an important regional recreation resource. The park offers a peaceful, natural setting for varied recreational activities such as swimming, hiking, camping, picnicking, fishing, boating and nature study. The primary interpretive theme focuses on the Carolina bays. Recreational activities are appropriately limited to preserve the quality of the recreational experience and to protect the park's outstanding natural resources. Park development undertaken with federal Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance requires that the park be retained and used for public outdoor recreation purposes.

Jones Lake State Park offers exceptional scenic vistas of Jones and Salters lakes and their largely undeveloped shorelines. The broad expanses of tea colored water, the sand lake rims, and the dense bay forests are in stark contrast to one another. In places, beautiful majestic pond cypress trees hung with Spanish moss line the shore or grow in the shallow water. Trails wander through major natural communities of Carolina bays, offering opportunities to walk through and view pine forests, densely vegetated bog areas of Carolina bays, and also view lovely lakeside flora.

Jones Lake State Park exists so that its valuable geological, biological, recreational and scenic resources can be protected and because of the value of Jones and Salters lakes as public trust resources. The Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with preserving these resources and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of North Carolina's natural heritage.

06/04

III. SUMMARY OF INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The 1987 State Parks Act defines the purposes of the state parks system. It establishes that:

The State of North Carolina offers unique archaeologic, geologic, biologic, scenic and recreation resources. These resources are part of the heritage of the people of this State. The heritage of a people should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants.

It further provides that:

Park lands are to be used by the people of this State and their visitors in order to promote understanding of and pride in the natural heritage of this State.

One of the best methods of meeting these purposes is through environmental education. The definition of environmental education as set forth in *The North Carolina Environmental Education Plan* is given below.

Environmental Education is an active process that increases awareness, knowledge and skills that result in understanding, commitment, informed decisions and constructive action to ensure stewardship of all interdependent parts of the earth's environment.

Jones Lake State Park protects two water-filled Carolina bays – Jones and Salters lakes. Through its environmental education and interpretation program, the park staff encourages visitors to learn about Carolina bays and the unique plants and animals that live in and around them. Many of the Carolina bays in North Carolina and elsewhere have been drained and filled; few undisturbed examples remain. The main thrust of the park's education program is to increase public awareness of Carolina bays and inspire their preservation.

Jones Lake State Park has three primary themes and five secondary themes. In priority order, the primary themes are Carolina bay ecology, the mysterious origins of Carolina bays, and park history.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Carolina Bay Ecology and Conservation

This primary theme includes both the physical and biological characteristics of Carolina bays – their geomorphology, water quality and natural communities. Major exhibits in and around the park visitor's center illustrate physical features common to most bays and their associated natural communities. These communities include wet pine flatwoods, the lake and natural shoreline, pond pine woodland or bay forest, and the xeric sandhill scrub on the bay's sand rim. Park programs and interpretive exhibits highlight the unique plants and animals of the Carolina bays and their fascinating interrelationships. The park's Environmental Education Learning

Experience (EELE) provides hands-on activities that allow students to study the water quality of Jones Lake and discover reasons for its low biodiversity. Through the EELE, exhibits and interpretive programs, the park staff explains the importance of protecting and maintaining Carolina bays.

Origin of Carolina Bays

Most visitors are intrigued by the mysterious origins of the Carolina bays. The park staff provides programs and exhibits that demonstrate when and how bays may have formed and evolved to their current conditions. Although scientific theories are highlighted, the visitors are encouraged to use their imaginations to develop theories of their own.

Park History

The local community has a strong interest in the history of Jones Lake State Park. Opening in 1939, it was the first North Carolina state park for African Americans and remained segregated until the mid 1960s. Prior to its designation as a state park, the area's longleaf pine forests were exploited by the turpentine industry, and the Atlantic white cedars were logged. The federal government bought most of the submarginal farmland around Jones Lake by the late 1930s, and the Resettlement Administration oversaw the development of roads, trails and buildings to create the park. Park history is presented through interpretive programs and exhibits in the visitor's center.

SECONDARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Secondary themes for the park support and embellish the primary themes, and are listed below.

- Life on the Sand Rim
- Role of Prescribed Fire in Maintaining Natural Communities
- Carnivorous Plants
- Endangered Species
- Water Safety

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IV. PARK AND RECREATION DEMAND AND TRENDS

ANNUAL VISITATION TRENDS

Jones Lake State Park's annual visitation for the years from 1995 through 2005 is shown below in Figure IV-1. One traffic counter, located just inside the park entrance, is used to record visitation. A persons-per-car multiplier of two is used.

In the eleven years from 1995 through 2005, visitation has ranged from a low of 52,751 in 1996 to a high of 118,486 in 2003. Construction of the visitor's center, concession/bathhouse, and boathouse during 2004 and 2005 negatively affected visitation. Bad weather and major storms, particularly during popular holidays and summer weekends, can significantly impact visitation at state park units.

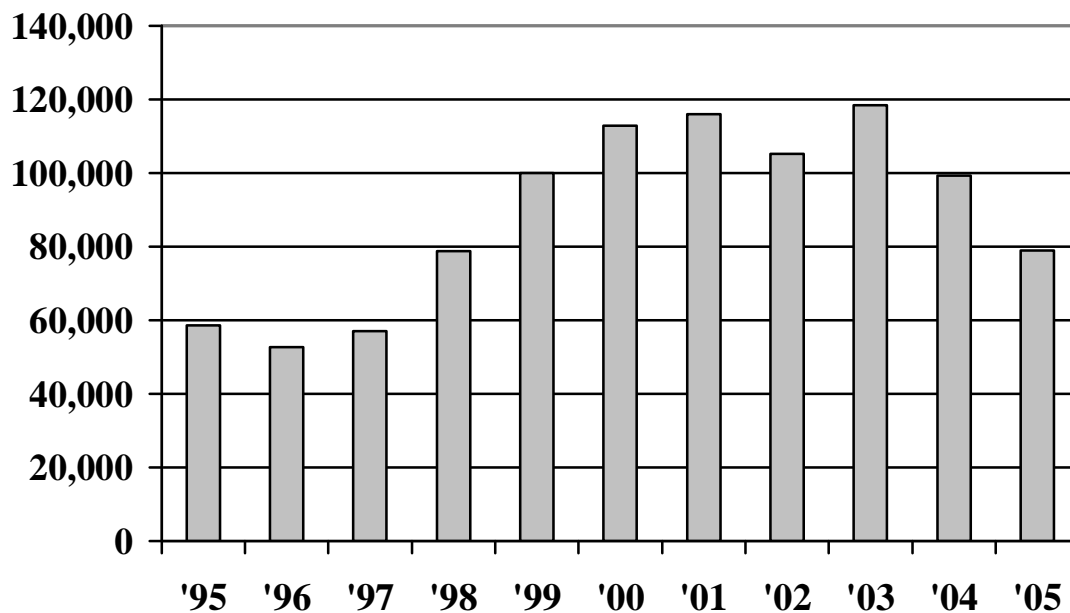


Figure IV-1. Jones Lake State Park Annual Visitation: 1995-2005

MONTHLY VISITATION TRENDS

Figure IV-2 shows the average monthly visitation at Jones Lake State Park for the four years ending in 2003. Jones Lake State Park's monthly visitation increases in the spring as the weather warms, peaking in July. Average monthly visitation then decreases each month through the end of the year, with attendance dropping to a monthly low in December.

The monthly visitation pattern suggests using seasonal and peak load personnel to assist in months of higher visitation. Where possible, staff vacation and other leave should be scheduled at times other than the higher visitation months.

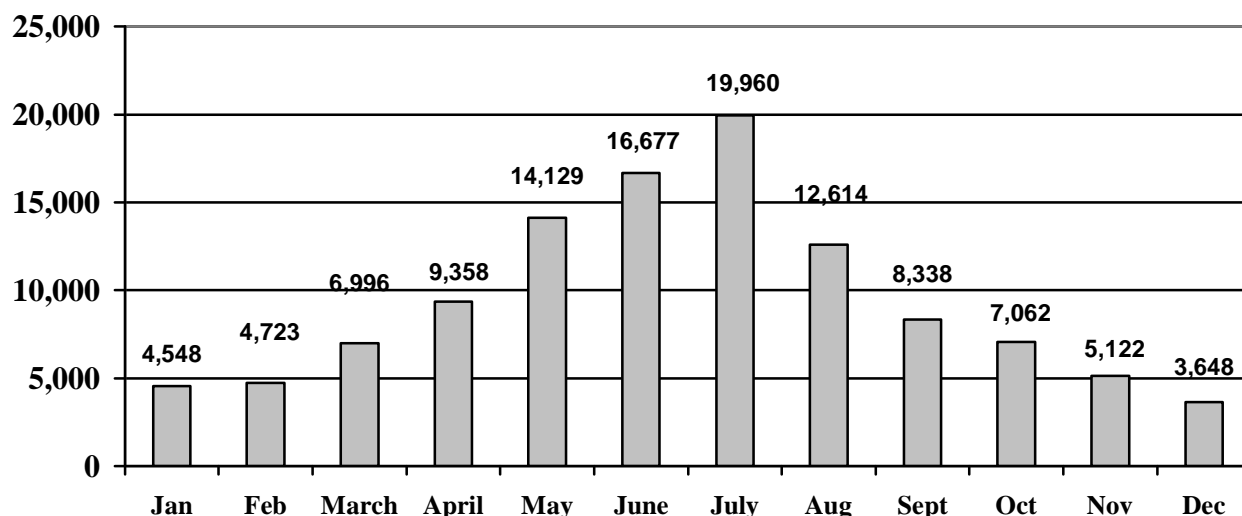


Figure IV-2. Jones Lake State Park Average Monthly Visitation: 2000-2003

VISITOR INFORMATION

In 1987 the United States Forest Service was contracted to conduct a Public Area Recreation Visitors Survey (PARVS) for the North Carolina State Parks System. The survey was designed to identify visitor socio-economic characteristics and economic contributions to the state's economy. Jones Lake State Park was not one of the eight park units involved in the survey, but the general information concerning state park visitors is useful in assessing visitation trends at the park.

Why do people visit state park units? The convenient location was cited by 31 percent of the respondents; 25 percent thought other areas were too crowded; 21 percent liked the quality facilities; 8 percent wanted to try a new area; 7 percent enjoyed the scenic beauty; and 6 percent came to see the attraction.

More than one third of state park visitors come from within a 30-mile radius (37 percent), while 17 percent come from 30 to 60 miles away. Survey respondents indicated that the parks were their sole destination 86 percent of the time. While many visitors come from nearby, the average one-way distance traveled was 139 miles. Approximately 25 percent of state park visitors come from out of state. Visitors averaged 4.1 trips per year to North Carolina state parks.

Seventy-eight percent of those surveyed indicated that they were return visitors. The average number of return trips per year was six. Sixty-one percent of visitors statewide came with family members, 16 percent with friends, and 7 percent with both family and friends. Ten percent of visitors came alone. Visitors also came in small numbers in organized groups and multiple families.

PARVS data indicates that 16.8 percent of groups surveyed used more than one car, and that the average number of persons per car was 3.0. The average age of the park visitor was 38.2 years. The

age distribution was as follows:

Table IV-1. Percent of Visitors by Age Group

<u>Under 6</u>	6-12	13-18	19-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 65
6.7	11.6	10.6	12.5	20.1	16.9	0.9	7.3	4.4

Since over 18 percent of visitors are under the age of 13, a demand exists for children's programs and facilities. Approximately 12 percent of visitors are 56 and older. This older segment of the general population will be increasing, and as it does, demand for improved quality, accessibility, and safety should increase.

OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION IN NORTH CAROLINA

The five most popular outdoor recreation activities in North Carolina are walking for pleasure, driving for pleasure, viewing scenery, participating in beach activities, and visiting historical sites. Three out of every four households participated in walking for pleasure at least once in the past 12 months (Table IV-2). In addition to the five most popular activities, over fifty percent of the households responding to a 1989 survey participated at least once in the following activities: swimming (in lakes, rivers, or oceans), visiting natural areas, picnicking, attending sports events, visiting zoos, and freshwater fishing.

The North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey was mailed to 3,100 randomly selected residents in the spring of 1989. Forty-five percent, or 1,399 people, returned completed surveys. Each person receiving the survey was asked to estimate the number of times that household members had participated in each of 43 activities. The survey results provide good insight into the current participation of North Carolinians in a wide range of outdoor recreation activities. The survey results also closely mirror those of the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment conducted in 1994-1995 and 2000.

Table IV-2. Outdoor Recreation Activities Ranked by Popularity.

RANK	ACTIVITY	PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS PARTICIPATING
1.	Walking for Pleasure	75%
2.	Driving for Pleasure	72
3.	Viewing Scenery	71
4.	Beach Activities	69
5.	Visiting Historical Sites	62
6.	Swimming (in Lakes, Rivers, and Oceans)	54
7.	Visiting Natural Areas	53
8.	Picnicking	52
9.	Attending Sports Events	52
10.	Visiting Zoos	51
11.	Fishing - Freshwater	50
12.	Use of Open Areas	41
13.	Swimming (in Pools)	40
14.	Fishing - Saltwater	38
15.	Attending Outdoor Cultural Events	35
16.	Bicycling for Pleasure	32
17.	Other Winter Sports	31
18.	Camping, Tent or Vehicle	29
19.	Softball and Baseball	28
20.	Hunting	28
21.	Use of Play Equipment	28
22.	Power Boating	26
23.	Trail Hiking	26
24.	Jogging or Running	24
25.	Basketball	24
26.	Nature Study	22
27.	Golf	22
28.	Target Shooting	20
29.	Water Skiing	19
30.	Camping, Primitive	14
31.	Tennis	14
32.	Use Motorcycles, Dirt Bikes, ATVs	13
33.	Use Four Wheel Drive Vehicles	13
34.	Canoeing and Kayaking	13
35.	Horseback Riding	12
36.	Volleyball	12
37.	Downhill Skiing	12
38.	Football	11
39.	Soccer	7
40.	Sailboating	7
41.	Skateboarding	6
42.	Cross Country Skiing	2
43.	Windsurfing	1

PRIORITIES OF PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION FUNDING

The North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey asked residents a series of questions in order to identify and rank future demand for various types of public outdoor recreation activities. Future demand was determined by asking them which activities they would have tried more often had adequate facilities been available. Respondents were then asked to rank these activities in order of importance. A scoring system was used assigning each activity a rating of high, moderate or low future demand based on the survey results.

In the second part of the analysis, the respondents' level of support for publicly funded outdoor recreation activities was determined by asking them to identify and rank those activities to which government should give highest priority when spending public money. The same scoring system used to analyze unmet demand was then applied to the survey results, with each activity receiving a high, moderate or low rating in public support for public funding.

In the final part of the needs analysis, the two ratings for each activity were combined to produce a score from one to nine that reflected both future demand and public funding priorities. The activities that ranked high in both future demand and support for public funding received the highest priority in the needs assessment. Support for public funding was given higher priority than expressed demand (Table IV-3).

Table IV-3. Priorities for Future Outdoor Recreation Activities

ACTIVITY	CODE	FUTURE DEMAND	SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC FUNDING
Walking for Pleasure	1	High	High
Camping, Tent or Vehicle	1	High	High
Picnicking	1	High	High
Beach Activities	1	High	High
Fishing - Freshwater	1	High	High
Attend Outdoor Cultural Events	1	High	High
Visiting Natural Areas	2	Moderate	High
Use of Play Equipment	2	Moderate	High
Visiting Zoos	2	Moderate	High
Visiting Historical Sites	2	Moderate	High
Bicycling for Pleasure	3	High	Moderate
Swimming (in Pools)	3	High	Moderate
Viewing Scenery	4	Moderate	Moderate
Hunting	4	Moderate	Moderate
Trail Hiking	4	Moderate	Moderate
Use of Open Areas	4	Moderate	Moderate
Target Shooting	4	Moderate	Moderate
Swimming (Lakes, Rivers, Ocean)	4	Moderate	Moderate
Fishing - Saltwater	4	Moderate	Moderate

NEARBY STATE AREAS AND FACILITIES

Bladen Lakes State Forest

The 33,017-acre Bladen Lakes State Forest in southeastern North Carolina is considered part of the state's Coastal Plain forest. Tree species include mixed hardwoods, Atlantic white cedar, loblolly, longleaf, and slash pine, as well as sweetgum, red maple, and Bald cypress. The forest also contains areas that have been identified and protected as Natural Heritage Preservation Sites. There are several areas set aside for protection and enhancement of red-cockaded woodpecker colony sites in longleaf pine. Some longleaf pine stands are also dedicated for the production and harvest of pine straw, used as mulch. Much of the forest is managed as game lands by the Wildlife Resources Commission.

Bushy Lake State Natural Area

Bushy Lake is an excellent example of a “low bay”, with its interior having the appearance of an open savannah with scattered trees, shrubs, and a variety of grasses. Although not a lake, it does contain shallow water for much of the year, as well as several small ponds. Limited access is provided for low-intensity recreational use such as nature observation, hiking, and environmental education. Park staff from Jones Lake State Park manages Bushy Lake, which is located in Cumberland County.

Lake Waccamaw and Lake Waccamaw State Park

Lake Waccamaw, an 8,938-acre lake with a 14-mile shoreline, is located in Columbus County. The lake is one of hundreds of Carolina Bays in the state, although most are much smaller and are filled with vegetation. The lake is popular for sailing, power boating and water sports.

The 1784-acre [Lake Waccamaw State Park](#) is located along the shore of Lake Waccamaw. The park offers a visitor's center with exhibits, picnic area with restrooms, primitive group camping, fishing, a one-half mile nature trail, boardwalk and sun shelter. There is no boating access provided at the park, but two free public boat launches are available nearby.

Lumber River State Park

[Lumber River State Park](#), created in 1989, stretches 115 miles from NC 1412 in Scotland County downstream to the North Carolina-South Carolina state line. The slow-moving blackwater river offers opportunities for canoeing, boating, picnicking, primitive camping and fishing. Facilities are primarily located at Princess Ann, on the west side of the river in Robeson County.

Singletary Lake State Park

Primarily used for organized group camping, [Singletary Lake State Park](#) has two group camps with mess halls and kitchens, cabins and washhouses. One of the group camps was constructed as a public works project during the Great Depression. The park contains the 572-acre Singletary Lake, a Carolina bay, and approximately 650 acres of surrounding land located in Bladen County. All of the lake and its almost four miles of undeveloped shoreline lies within the state park. A 500-foot pier extends into the

lake and provides a place for swimming and sunning, and a one-mile long trail travels near the lake and through nearby forest.

Turnbull Creek Educational State Forest

Located in Bladen County within Bladen Lakes State Forest, Turnbull Creek is one of six educational state forests developed as living environmental education centers. The forest is designed to promote better understanding of the value of forests. A 3.5-mile driving trail provides visitors with a look at all phases of forest management. Foot trails and picnic sites with tables and grills and one picnic shelter are also available.

White Lake

White Lake, located in Bladen County, covers 1068 acres. The lake's clear water makes it a popular recreational resource for swimming, boating and water sports. Various private rental accommodations are available. Private development rings most of the lake's shoreline, limiting public access.

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V. SUMMARY OF LAWS GUIDING PARK MANAGEMENT

There are many federal and state statutes, state and federal executive orders, and administrative rules and policies that govern the operation of the state parks system. This chapter includes a brief discussion of the primary legal basis for the existence and operation of the state parks system. It also includes other legal issues of particular concern at Jones Lake State Park.

STATE LEGAL MANDATES

North Carolina Constitution

Article XIV, Section 5 of the North Carolina Constitution sets overall policy by broadly defining the conservation and protection of natural resources and the acquisition of such resources as a proper function of government. The amendment reads in part as follows:

It shall be the policy of this State to conserve and protect its lands and waters for the benefit of all its citizenry, and to this end it shall be a proper function of the State of North Carolina and its political subdivision to acquire and preserve park, recreation, and scenic areas, to control and limit the pollution of our air and water, to control excessive noise, and in every other appropriate way to preserve as a part of the common heritage of this state its forests, wetlands, estuaries, beaches, historical sites, open land, and places of beauty.

State Parks Act

The State Parks Act (G.S. 113-44.7 through 113-44.14) sets forth a mission statement for the state parks system. It states that the system functions to preserve and manage representative examples of significant biological, geological, scenic, archaeological, and recreational resources, and that park lands are to be used by the people of the state and their visitors and descendants in order to promote understanding of and pride in the state's natural heritage.

The State Parks Act also calls for development and periodic revisions of a system plan to achieve the mission and purpose of the state parks system in a reasonable, timely, and cost-efficient manner. The Act describes the System Plan components and requires that public participation be a component of plan development and revisions.

The State Parks Act also calls for the classification of park resources and development of general management plans (GMPs) for each park. GMPs are to include a statement of park purpose, an analysis of major resources and facilities, and a statement of management direction.

Powers and Duties of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

The Department is authorized to make investigations of the resources of the state and to take such measures as it may deem best suited to promote the conservation and development of such resources. In addition, the Department may care for state forests and parks and other recreational areas now owned, or to be acquired by, the state. (G.S. 113-8)

State Nature and Historic Preserve Dedication Act

The State Nature and Historic Preserve Dedication Act (G.S. 143-260.6) was authorized by Article 14, Section 5 of the North Carolina Constitution. It seeks to ensure that lands and waters acquired and preserved for park, recreational, and scenic areas for the purpose of controlling and limiting the pollution of air and water, controlling excessive noise, and in every other appropriate way preserving as a part of the common heritage of the state, continue to be used for those purposes. The State Nature and Historic Preserve Act provides a strong legal tool for protecting lands from incompatible uses. The addition and removal of lands to and from the State Nature and Historic Preserve require a vote of three-fifths of the members of each house of the General Assembly. The State Nature and Historic Preserve Dedication Act protects all land and water within Jones Lake State Park's boundaries as of May 6, 2003.

Nature Preserves Act

The Nature Preserves Act (G.S. 113A-164) prescribes methods by which nature preserves may be dedicated for the benefit of present and future citizens of North Carolina. It authorizes a Natural Heritage Program to provide assistance in the selection and nomination for registration or dedication of natural areas.

The state may accept the dedication of outstanding natural areas by gift, grant, or purchase of fee simple title or other interest in land. Lands dedicated are held in trust by the state and are managed and protected according to regulations. They may not be used for any purpose inconsistent with the provision of the Nature Preserves Act or disposed of by the state without a finding by the Governor and Council of State that the other use or disposition is in the best interest of the state. Dedicated nature preserves highest and best use is contributing to public understanding of natural systems, scientific research, education about natural processes, habitat for rare species and natural communities, contemplation and compatible recreation, and preservation of natural beauty (N.C.A.C. 12H .0309).

Jones Lake State Park has a dedicated nature preserve that consists of 1,725 acres dedicated in 1999. The Jones Lake State Park Dedicated Nature Preserve includes 1218 land acres and 507 acres of water that comprise Jones and Salters lakes. The park's recreational development, clustered on approximately 200 acres on the southeastern side of Jones Lake, is excluded from the dedicated area. Management is to be in accordance with general recommendations contained in the registry agreement.

North Carolina Environmental Policy Act of 1971

Recognizing the profound influence that human activity has on the natural environment, the General Assembly passed the Environmental Policy Act “...to assure that an environment of high quality will be maintained for the health and well-being of all....”

The Act declares that:

It shall be the continuing policy of the State of North Carolina to conserve and protect its natural resources and to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony. Further, it shall be the policy of the State to seek, for all its citizens safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically pleasing surroundings; to attain the widest possible range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety; and to preserve the important historic and cultural elements of our common inheritance. (G.S. 113A-3)

Archaeological Resources Protection Act

The Jones Lake State Park area is known to have been occupied by American Indian tribes. The area also contains some cultural resources associated with early settlements. Unknown archaeological resources may also exist, both within the existing park boundaries and in nearby areas. Development of recreational facilities should avoid destruction of these resources.

A permit is required from the Department of Administration, in consultation with the Department of Cultural Resources, to excavate, remove, damage, or alter any archaeological resource on state lands. Archaeological resources are defined as the remains of past human life or activities that are at least 50 years old and are of archaeological interest (G.S. 70-10).

While there are other General Statutes that concern the state parks system and the environment, the above-described statutes, along with Article XIV, Section 5, of the North Carolina Constitution, largely define the purposes of the state parks system and serve to guide the operation of state park system units.

State Lakes Statutes

Statutes that govern state lakes also protect Jones and Salters lakes. State lakes are required to be retained by the state for public purposes (G.S. 143-3), and the state has authority to construct public facilities, regulate piers and docks, and make rules for operation of watercraft and use of water by the public (G.S. 113-34).

FEDERAL LAWS

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (PL 88-578) offers protection and places restrictions on fund-assisted outdoor recreation areas. By virtue of receiving Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant assistance, most of the state parks system - including Jones Lake State Park - is subject to LWCF rules and regulations. Jones Lake State Park has received one LWCF development grant, awarded in 1965 (Grant #37-00081).

Property acquired or developed in whole or in part with LWCF assistance cannot be converted to other than public outdoor recreation use without federal approval. A conversion may take place only if approved by the Secretary of the Interior, and only then if replacement property of equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent usefulness and location is made. Park land acquired at Jones Lake State Park since the LWCF grant award does not fall under LWCF regulations.

LWCF requirements include: programming, operating and maintaining areas in a manner that encourages public participation; maintaining the property so it appears attractive and inviting to the public; maintaining property, facilities and equipment to provide for public safety; keeping facilities, roads, trails and other improvements in reasonable repair throughout their lifetime to prevent undue deterioration and encourage public use; keeping the park and facilities open for use at reasonable hours and times; and making future development meet LWCF rules and regulations. LWCF-assisted sites are periodically inspected by state and federal inspectors to ensure compliance with LWCF requirements.

The Americans With Disabilities Act

Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination against any "*qualified individual with a disability*."

New Construction and Alterations

Buildings that are constructed or altered by, on behalf of, or for the use of a public entity shall be designed, constructed, or altered to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. (Section 35.151 of Title II)

Existing Facilities

Structural changes in existing facilities are required only when there is no other feasible way to make the public entity's program accessible. ("Structural changes" include all physical changes to a facility [28 CFR Part 35, Section 35.150, Title II of the ADA Section-by-Section Analysis].)

When alterations affect access to a primary function of a facility, the entity shall also make alterations to the path of travel to the area and bathrooms, public telephones, and drinking fountains serving the

altered area.

Programs and Services

....each service, program, or activity conducted by a public entity, when viewed in its entirety, be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.
(Title II, Section 35.150)

This includes, but is not limited to, the provision of auxiliary aids and services, including services and devices for effective communication where necessary to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of a service, program, or activity conducted by a public entity.

Signs

A public entity must ensure that persons with impaired vision and hearing can obtain information regarding the location of accessible services, activities, and facilities. Signs must be provided at all inaccessible entrances to each facility directing users to an accessible entrance or to a location where information can be obtained about accessible facilities. The international symbol for accessibility must be used at each accessible entrance to a facility. (Title II, Section 35.163)

Clean Water Act

Jones Lake State Park 's sensitive wetland areas receive protection from Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. The Act prohibits the discharge of dredge or fill materials into waters, including wetlands, without a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Activities in wetlands for which permits may be required include but are not limited to: placement of fill material; ditching activities; land clearing involving relocation of soil material; land leveling; most road construction; and dam construction (33 USC 1344). The Division will avoid undertaking construction located in wetlands unless there is no practical alternative and all practical measures are taken to minimize harm to the wetland.

Deed Restrictions

The state park was acquired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture under provisions of the Bankhead-Jones Act. The deed includes the restriction that the land be used for public purposes, and it will revert to the United States if it ceases to be so used. The United States retains a three-fourths undivided interest in all mineral rights, and full rights to uranium, thorium, and other materials determined by provisions of the Atomic Energy Act of 1946.

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VI. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Division of Parks and Recreation's approach to natural resource management is directed by the North Carolina Constitution and the State Parks Act, both of which require the prudent management of natural resources. The constitution sets the overall policy by broadly defining the conservation and protection of natural resources and the acquisition of such resources as a proper function of government. The State Parks Act states that unique archaeological, geological, biological, scenic and recreational resources are a part of the heritage of the people that *"...should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants."*

The North Carolina State Parks System plays an important role in maintaining, rehabilitating and perpetuating the state's natural heritage. The natural resources of the state parks system are: high quality, rare or representative examples of natural communities; native plants and animals; geological features and landforms; water resources; and the natural processes that affect these resources. The primary objective in natural resource management will be the protection of natural resources for their inherent integrity and for appropriate types of enjoyment while ensuring their availability for future generations.

It is the Division's policy that natural resources will be managed by allowing natural environments to evolve through natural processes with minimal human influence. Natural resource management will not attempt solely to preserve individual species or processes; rather, it will attempt to maintain all the components and processes of a park's naturally evolving ecosystems. When intervention is necessary, direct or secondary effects on park resources will be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Intervention of natural processes may occur:

1. To correct or compensate for the previous human disruption of natural processes;
2. To protect, restore or enhance rare species and natural communities;
3. To protect, restore or enhance significant archaeological resources;
4. To construct, maintain, improve or protect park facilities; and,
5. To prevent danger to human health or safety around park facilities.

All park facilities will be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid adverse impacts to high quality natural communities, rare plant and animal species, major archaeological sites and other significant natural and cultural resources.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Division of Parks and Recreation staff identifies natural and cultural resource management issues as a component of the general management plan process and groups them according to the categories shown below. Staff assigns a high, medium or low priority to each issue using the criteria described at the end of this section. The Division's Natural Resources Program is responsible for all actions unless otherwise noted.

Category	Subcategory	Project Description	Priority*
Animal Resource Management	Rare Species Management	Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are monitored by the Wildlife Resources Commission and should continue to be monitored.	Medium
Botanical Resource Management	Inventory Deficiencies	Natural community inventory is needed for the entire park.	Medium
		An updated rare species inventory is needed for the entire park.	Medium
	Rare Species Management	Monitor populations of new species identified in the rare species inventory.	Low
Cultural Resource Management	Cultural Resource Management	Develop a plan for Native American canoes in the lake.	Medium
Infrastructure Management	Environmental Compliance for Planned Construction Projects	An environmental review needs to be conducted for the proposed trail around Jones Lake.	High
	Road Management	Management of roads adjoining NC Forest Resource property needs to be examined.	Medium
	Trails Management	Current trail around Jones Lake is impassable. This trail needs to be re-routed.	High
	Septic/Wastewater Management	Remove septic tank from around ranger residence.	Medium
Land-Use Management	Buffer Zone to State Park Property	A 1,000 foot buffer zone around the park needs to be established to deter encroachment from hunting near visitor use areas.	Medium
	Fire Management	Current acres under prescription need to be burned on a consistent rotation.	High
	Park Boundaries	Complete survey boundary marking around Bushy Lake.	Medium
	Rights-of-Way	Road right-of-way issues with NC Forest Service should be documented.	High
Water Resource Management	Riparian Buffer Zone Protection	Logging activities near Ruskin Road (Salters Road) need to be monitored.	Medium
		New residence near New Salters should be monitored for sedimentation impacts.	Medium
	Water Pollution	Monitor roads and trails to ensure stream/lake bank integrity is maintained.	Medium
		A number of ditches along Highway 242 appear to carry sediment back into the park.	Medium

* Explanation of priority codes

High If the resource management activity is not undertaken in the near future there is a distinct possibility that natural resources will be compromised. These issues should be addressed within the next five years.

Medium Although there is a possibility that resources could be compromised, the priority is not as critical as the high priority projects.

Low Projects with low priority have significantly less chance for compromise of the natural resources if the project is not undertaken in a timely fashion or the project may depend on completion of other projects.

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VII. PHYSICAL PLANT INVENTORY

ROAD AND PARKING SYSTEM

Background information

The Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) conducted a road inventory for Jones Lake State Park in March of 1990 and found .72 miles of paved road; 1.83 miles of unpaved road; and 8,738 square yards of paved parking lots.

The entrance road and all the park interior roads were constructed in 1950. The main entrance road, maintenance area road and parking were resurfaced in 1998. The bathhouse parking area was resurfaced in 1993. A survey of the roads, parking areas and utilities was conducted in June of 2004 by construction staff in preparation for this general management plan.

Description

The road system includes the main park road that begins at US 242 and ends at the lake bathhouse. The main entrance road is 18-foot wide with six-foot shoulders. A one-way camping road feeds off the main entrance road and is approximately .3 miles long. The paved road and parking lot have a 3.5-inch course aggregate base and a two-inch asphalt surface. As part of the visitor's center capital improvement project begun in 2004, the park road system is being changed to create a new park entrance that comes off US 242 at the old bathhouse location. The new road will run through the old bathhouse parking lot and tie in with the existing camping and maintenance roads. There currently are approximately 234 parking spaces in the new visitor's center/bathhouse. Corrugated metal pipes at the driveways and low areas provide drainage.

Current Conditions

The bathhouse parking lot, which had large block cracking in the old pavement due to the sand-clay base, is being completely removed. The new parking lot at the new visitor's center will have a six-inch stone base topped by two inches of I-2 asphalt. The maintenance area parking lot and office parking lot are in good condition. Paved in 1998, the roads are in good condition. Road shoulders are in fair shape; the soil type in the park prevents grass from growing on the road shoulder.

Road Repair Needs and Costs

1. The existing park entrance road needs to be closed to the public and used only as a service entrance for access to the park maintenance area and ranger residence. This will be done after the new visitor's center is constructed and the new park entrance completed. Estimated cost is \$25,000.
2. The ranger residence driveway needs to have the roots removed. Following root removal, repaving will be necessary. Estimated cost is \$7,500.

SEWER SYSTEM

Description

Seven different sewer systems are in the park. All systems have the conventional sewer drain fields with septic tanks. The systems are as follows:

Visitor's Center System- The new visitor's center will use the old bathhouse sewer system that was constructed in 1958. The system has a 5,000-gallon septic tank with approximately ten 75 linear foot drain lines. A 1,000-gallon dosing siphon tank is attached to the septic tank.

New Bathhouse System- A new bathhouse is currently being constructed about 100 feet away from the new visitor's center, and it will have a 3000-gallon septic tank and a 3,000-gallon pump tank. This system will use the existing drain field at the visitor's center.

Campground Sewer System- This system was installed in 1950. It has a 2,000-gallon septic tank with an unknown number of drain lines. The tank has risers and was pumped out in 1998.

Office and Personnel Barracks Sewer System- This system was installed in 1990 as an addition to the barracks/office renovation project. It has a 1,200-gallon septic tank with a 1,200-gallon pump and an unknown number of drain lines. The pump station has a simplex single effluent pump with controls and floats.

Maintenance Shop Sewer System- This system was installed in 1950. It has a 600-gallon septic tank with one drain field line approximately 100 feet long.

Ranger Residence Sewer System- This system, installed in 1998, has a 1,000-gallon septic tank with two 100-foot drain lines.

Superintendent Residence Sewer System- Installed in 1990, this system has a 1,000-gallon septic tank with three 60-foot drain lines.

Current Conditions

Improvements were made to all of the existing sewer systems in 1998 except for the superintendent's residence system and the office/barracks system. All tanks have been pumped out within the last five years. All systems appear to be functioning adequately at the present time, with no effluent surfacing.

Sewer Repair Needs and Costs

1. The present pump at the office needs to be checked for proper operation, and the alarm system also needs to be checked for proper operation. Costs will be determined after the inspections.

2. The park needs to have a licensed sub-surface sewer operator when the new visitor center and bathhouse facility comes on line. Sub-surface school training for a park maintenance person will cost \$1000.
3. The campground sewer will need to be replaced if additional sites and electrical sites are added to the camping loops.

WATER SYSTEM

The park is supplied water by the Bladen County public water system. The park connected to this system in 1998, and all the park's water lines were replaced using new pvc lines of various sizes. All valves were also replaced. The park's deep water well was capped and disconnected from the county water supply.

The main lines are in excellent shape, and the valves are in good shape but need to be exercised on a routine schedule. The new visitor's center and bathhouse will have new waterlines and valves installed at construction. New water meters are also being installed. No repairs are needed.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

The park power is fed underground, supplied by Four County Electric Membership Corporation located in Elizabethtown. All park facilities that use electric power have a pad-mounted transformer located at each building site. The power company owns the underground system and will maintain the underground lines. The system was installed in the late 1990s as part of a water and sewer project and is in good condition. No repairs are needed.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM

Star Telephone Company provides phone service to the park. A new phone system will be provided at the new visitor's center. There are currently three pay phones located in the park. The telephone system is in good condition, and no repairs are needed.

FACILITY INVENTORY AND INSPECTION PROGRAM

Buildings and other structures in state parks are necessary to provide services to park visitors. These structures are essential for protecting public safety, health, and welfare while providing opportunities for outdoor recreation. They include infrastructure, such as roads, parking lots, trails, and systems for potable water, electrical distribution, and sewage treatment. They also include operational and recreational facilities, such as campgrounds, picnic areas, concession buildings, boardwalks, park offices, residences, pump houses, warehouses, barracks, maintenance shops, visitor centers, etc. These facilities must be properly maintained to provide for a safe, continuous, and quality park-use experience.

Jones Lake State Park Building Inventory

Pictures and descriptions of the structures currently in use at Jones Lake State Park and their repair needs follow.



Figure VII-1. Old Park Office and Barracks

Concrete masonry structure built in 1948. 1803 square feet. Used for park offices and as personnel barracks. Fair condition. .



Figure VII-2. Shop / Maintenance Building

Heated concrete masonry structure built in 1948. 1281 square feet. Used as a workshop and maintenance area. Fair condition. Located in the maintenance area.



Figure VII-3. Fuel Storage Tank

The tank is in good condition. Constructed in 2003. The open post and beam shed that used to cover the fuel storage tank has been demolished. Located in the maintenance area.

Canoe Storage Shed (no picture available)

This 191 square foot post and beam structure, built in 1995, is in good condition. Used for canoe and paddleboat storage, it is located in the maintenance area.



Figure VII-4. Storage Building & Attached Sheds

The frame shed, built in 1973, is in fair condition. Supplies are stored in the enclosed 552 square feet; attached sheds on the right side and rear are used for equipment storage. More square footage is needed to store equipment. Located in the maintenance area.



Figure VII-5. Pump House Storage Building

This 196 square foot unheated concrete masonry structure, previously used as a pump house, now is used for storage. Built in 1973, it is in fair condition. Located in the maintenance area.



Figure VII-6. Campground Washhouse

Heated concrete masonry structure built in 1948. 540 square feet. Used as the campground washhouse. Poor condition. Doors, ceiling and interior floor dimensions do not meet the N.C. Building Code and ADA requirements.



Figure VII-7. Large Picnic Shelter

This 2,093 square foot post and beam picnic shelter was built in 1948. Located near the swim area, it has a fireplace at each end. Fair condition.

Wood Storage Shed (No picture available)

Built in 1991, the 190 square foot open post and beam structure is used for wood storage. It is in fair condition. Located in the maintenance area.



Figure VII-8. Boathouse

The 2,037 square foot boathouse, built in 1948, is in poor condition. The unheated, wood-frame structure is currently being improved as a part of the 2004/2005 visitor's center construction project.



Figure VII-9. Picnic Shelter

Six of these small picnic shelters with concrete slabs were built in 1979. They are post and beam construction and each has 236 square feet. An extended roof provides shelter from the afternoon sun. They are in fair condition.



Figure VII-10. Superintendent's Residence

Built in 1992, the 1,586 square foot, wood-frame residence with an attached carport is in good condition.



Figure VII-11. Visitor's Center

Finished in 2005, the new visitor's center contains staff offices, exhibits, an auditorium, classroom, lobby and restrooms. The new bathhouse/concession building is located on the left behind the visitor's center.

Ranger Residence (No picture available.)

Built in 1964, the 1,253 square foot wood-frame residence is in fair condition.

Ranger Residence Storage Building (No picture available)

Built in 1988, this unheated, 148 square foot wood-frame building is used for storage. It is in fair condition.



Figure VII-12. Renovated Pier and Boathouse

Renovations on the pier and boathouse were completed in 2005.



Figure VII-13. Bathhouse/Concession Building
The Bathhouse/Concession Building was completed in 2005.

MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PRIORITIES

As a part of the general management plan process, proposed capital improvement projects at Jones Lake State Park were carefully reviewed to determine if all projects were still needed and if changes to projects were desirable. In reviewing the proposed capital improvement projects, the general management plan evaluation team considered factors such as changes in environmental regulations, condition of facilities, natural heritage inventory, recreation demand, operational issues and needs, visitor safety considerations, State Parks Act mandates, and trends.

As a result of the general management plan review of the capital improvement projects, one project – *Building Renovations* - was eliminated as a capital project. Park staff have completed some repairs originally included in this project. Remaining building repairs needed - to the workshop, storage building, residences, pump house storage building, and picnic shelters - will be accomplished using major maintenance funds. Two new capital improvement projects were added: *Picnic Shelter* and *Ranger Residence at Bushy Lake*. Project scopes were also revised where necessary.

Each project was then evaluated and ranked using the Division's Project Evaluation Program (PEP), thus creating a revised project priority list of capital improvement projects for Jones Lake State Park, which is shown below. These projects were then combined with projects evaluated and ranked for other state park units, resulting in a priority list of capital improvement projects for the entire state parks system.

Revised Capital Improvement Priorities

Rank	Project Title	*Score	Cost
1	Trail Improvements	673	\$193,033
2	Campground Improvements	593	647,417
3	Picnic Shelter	588	155,736
4	Personnel Barracks Renovations	560	222,984
5	Warehouse/Equipment Storage Shed	550	352,185
6	Ranger Residence at Bushy Lake	540	<u>278,100</u>

Total: \$1,849,455

** The score comes from the Division's Project Evaluation Program (PEP). The PEP uses an evaluation formula to rank projects that considers four factors: the objective of the project; the justification or urgency for funding; the estimated annual number of persons (visitors and/or employees) who are affected by the project; and the project's significance, ranging from local to national. The park superintendent, district superintendent, and division management evaluate projects. There are 15 objectives categorizing a project's purpose, and each project can have a primary and secondary objective.*

Capital Improvement Project Descriptions

1. Trail Improvements: This project will make improvements to approximately 40,000 linear feet of trail, including boardwalks as needed and a spur trail to Salters Lake. Wet soil conditions limit when some of the desired work can be undertaken, and fragile soils also impose limitations on construction. Some existing trail on the western side of Jones Lake that is located on unsuitable soils through bay forest will be retired.
2. Campground Improvements: The park now has 20 tent/trailer campsites. The current washhouse does not meet N.C. Building Code or accessibility standards. There are no handicapped campsites nor is there a dump station. The new project will improve ten existing campsites by adding borders, tables, screenings, and grills, including one handicapped site. The ten other sites will be converted to electric sites, and a few new sites will be added to the existing campground area if possible. The existing washhouse will be replaced with a new facility to be located at the same site. A new waterless toilet will be installed at the group camp area. Water and electric lines will be extended as needed to campsites and other areas, and a dump station will be installed to meet health and safety codes.
3. Picnic Shelter: Construction of an eight-table picnic shelter will take place in the day use area. Tables and grills will be included. Electricity and water will be extended to the site. No fireplaces will be included. The existing large shelter is the most frequently used facility at the park, and this project will construct a second one somewhat smaller in size.
4. Personnel Barracks Renovations: Once the visitor's center construction is completed, the park office will be relocated there. This project will expand the barracks area and renovate to current health and safety standards. The barracks is important to the recruitment and retention of temporary personnel.
5. Warehouse/Equipment Storage Shed: This project will extend water and electric lines, convert the pump house storage building to a flammable storage building, extend pavement in the maintenance area and construct a 1,700 square foot equipment storage shed in the existing maintenance area.
6. Ranger Residence at Bushy Lake: With additional land purchases at Bushy Lake State Natural Area, ranger presence there is needed. This project will construct a ranger residence and a storage building so that some frequently needed equipment can

be stored on site and not have to be moved back and forth from Jones Lake. It may be preferable to purchase an existing residence with future land acquisition; if so, this project will be dropped.

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VIII. OPERATIONS ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

Division of Parks and Recreation staff identified the major park issues facing Jones Lake State Park at the initiation of the general management plan process. The issues have been divided into three categories: natural resources (see Chapter VI), capital improvements (see Chapter VII) and operations. This chapter identifies park operations issues and makes recommendations for addressing them during the next five years. Operations issues for Jones Lake State Park that are of significant concern are:

1. Low visitor use / lack of facilities
2. Need for a usable hiking trail system
3. Hike-in primitive camping at Salter's Lake
4. Modernize the tent and trailer camping area
5. Boundary management
6. Furnishings for the park visitor's center
7. Need for a safety zone on game lands abutting the park
8. Construction of an equipment storage building
9. Communications issues
10. Property needs
11. Bushy Lake State Natural Area
12. Staffing Needs

LOW VISITOR USE / LACK OF FACILITIES

Background

Jones Lake State Park was opened to the public in 1939 as the first state park established for use by African Americans, and the park remained segregated until the 1960s. The apex of park popularity seems to have occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, when the park served a population that had few other recreational opportunities available to them. Since those busy days, visitation to the park's day-use area has diminished, and even on the busiest weekends the park is no longer crowded. Jones Lake has not expanded its range of recreational offerings since the 1960s, and over the years, amenities offered to park visitors have actually diminished.

Recommendations

Construct an eight-table rental picnic shelter. The twelve table shelter that the park currently operates is the park's most heavily used facility, and it is generally reserved on both Saturdays and Sundays throughout the spring and summer months. A new capital improvement project to construct such a shelter has been created and is contained in Chapter VII.

Upgrade the beach and swimming area. Many visitors express a reluctance to use the Jones Lake swimming area due to the dark appearance of the water and because they believe the beach area harbors snakes. Though nothing could be done to change the color of the water, the beach and swimming areas can be upgraded to reduce the snaky appearance. Trees, vegetation and the associated root masses should be pulled out of the water and removed from the vicinity of the swimming area after environmental review. The sand beach can be widened and renourished with clean, white, screened sand.

Upgrade the park's fleet of pedal boats by replacing two-seated pedal boats with four-seated pedal boats. The park currently rents four two-seated boats and two four-seated boats. Experience at other North Carolina state parks has shown that the boats that can accommodate four riders are vastly more popular with park patrons. Install two high quality sand horseshoe courts in the playfield area.

NEED FOR A USABLE HIKING TRAIL SYSTEM

Background

Hiking is a basic recreational pursuit that should be offered at all North Carolina State Parks. Jones Lake currently does not have a hiking trail suitable for use by the public. The one hiking trail at Jones Lake State Park is poorly routed, constructed and maintained, and it gets little use. The "Lake Trail" is 13,100 feet in length and routed on wet organic soils through heavily vegetated bay forest. Consequently, the trail tread does not hold up to pedestrian traffic and has become a deep, wet ditch, and standing water is present along the trail in all seasons. Protruding roots and cypress knees abound, forcing the hiker to constantly monitor his or her foot placement. The current trail traverses only one habitat type, bay forest. The vegetation is thick, and it aggressively invades the trail corridor following mechanical trimming. Frequent trimming has given the vegetation bordering the trail a hedge like appearance, and the prolific growth impedes the view of the surrounding forest. Due to the dearth of habitat types, the trail is boring and lacks inspiration.

Recommendations

Complete the rerouting and trail-hardening project recently proposed to the Division's management. This project will include: (1) abandoning much of the old trail which travels through the wet bay forest; (2) rerouting the trail tread to existing service roads located on mineral soils; and (3) hardening with gravel or boardwalks those sections of trail which cannot be removed from the wet bay forest. The proposed new loop trail will be 26,160 feet in length and cross several diverse habitat types.

Construct a spur trail leading from the new loop trail to Salter's Lake. This spur trail will be approximately 6,250 feet in length and will provide access to a scenic overview of the large and undeveloped Carolina bay lake. A capital improvement project to make trail improvements is described in Chapter VII.

HIKE-IN PRIMITIVE CAMPING AT SALTER'S LAKE

Background

Salter's Lake is the only large, open water Carolina bay lake in North Carolina that is totally devoid of human development and visible impacts. As such, Salter's Lake offers opportunities for a true wilderness experience, which is increasingly rare in southeastern North Carolina. The lake itself covers approximately 330 acres and is surrounded by high quality sand rim, pine flatwoods, and wet pine woodlands habitats. The Division of Parks and Recreation is committed to allowing public access to this rare and pristine environment, but wishes to allow recreational use in such a manner as to reduce human impacts on the resource.

Currently, access is allowed through a permit system that requires a member of the public wishing to visit Salter's Lake to first locate a park ranger. The park ranger then accompanies the individual to the park office and a permit is issued. The ranger must then escort the visitor to Salter's Lake, crossing Bladen Lakes State Forest and Wildlife Resources Commission gamelands before passing through a gate along the state park boundary. The visitor is asked to secure the gate upon leaving the Salter's Lake area, and to drop off the permit in the park mailbox, thereby alerting ranger staff that they have left the area. The system is cumbersome and time consuming, causing it to also be unpopular with the public and park staff. Less than ten such permits are issued annually.

The access road to Salter's Lake is almost entirely outside the park boundaries, is less than 8 feet wide in many places, and is poorly maintained. Often Salter's Lake users bring trailered boats to use in the lake. No boat ramp has been established at Salter's Lake, consequently these individuals must back considerable distances into the lake in order to take the boat on and off the trailer.

Recommendations

Do away with the current permitting system and vehicle and boating access to Salter's Lake. Access should be hike-in only through the aforementioned trail system in order to maintain a wilderness experience. To provide recreational opportunities, two hike-in primitive campsites should be constructed along the sand rim near the lake. Amenities should only include a vault type toilet (or a pit privy) and a secure fire ring at each campsite.

MODERNIZE THE TENT AND TRAILER CAMPING AREA

Background

Jones Lake State Park currently has 20 tent and trailer campsites that offer minimal amenities to the campground users. Campsites are bare sand and each contains a fire ring, a picnic table and a trash can. Only one campsite (#3) has electrical and water

hookups. Frequent raking has left each campsite in a depression; consequently rainwater does not drain from the sites as quickly as desirable. The boundaries of each campsite are not well defined; hence some sites have sprawled outward and led to problems associated with soil compaction and vegetative destruction. The centrally located washhouse, which serves both the tent and trailer campground and the group campsite, was constructed in 1956 and fails to adequately meet the needs of the park. The washhouse is not ADA compliant, suffers from extremely low ceilings and doorways, and has no storage space for cleaning chemicals, paper supplies or tools.

Camping is a basic recreational activity at Jones Lake State Park, appreciated by many park users. The most popular site by far is the one site that offers water and electrical hookups. The park receives telephone calls daily inquiring about the availability of campsites suitable for recreational vehicles. The ability to use electrical hookups, and to a lesser extent water hookups, is extremely important to these recreational vehicle enthusiasts. Jones Lake State Park does not have any handicapped accessible campsites, nor is there a dump station in the park.

Recommendations

Update the Jones Lake campground by demolishing the old washhouse and replacing it with a modern handicapped accessible washhouse. Install one or two handicapped accessible campsites with paved drives and picnic table pads and paved walkways leading to the washhouse. Upgrade one-half of the campsites to include water and 50-amp electrical hookups. Every campsite should be delineated with timber borders and backfilled with clean, screened sand. Add a few additional campsites to the existing camping area if possible. Construct a dump station near the entrance to the campground. A capital improvement project to make campground improvements is described in Chapter VII.

BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

Background

Jones Lake State Park (1930 acres) and its satellite, Bushy Lake State Natural Area (approximately 3,700 acres), have many miles of park boundary abutting state forests, state game lands, and private properties. These boundary lines predominately traverse heavily vegetated areas with wet organic soils. A recent survey located all of the boundaries and corners of the Jones Lake State Park for the first time since the development of the park. This survey also uncovered an attempt by park neighbors to claim over seven acres of park property as their own. Park staff has been diligently clearing a boundary corridor, painting and signing witness trees, and installing Carsonite markers along the recently surveyed boundaries. Even with this concerted effort, only two-thirds of the Jones Lake boundary has been cleared and well marked in ten months. None of the vastly larger Bushy Lake boundary is cleared or marked. Current park staff is only vaguely familiar with the boundaries of the Bushy Lake SNA property. Jones Lake and Bushy Lake both suffer from heavy hunting pressure,

especially from deer and bear hunters utilizing dogs. Each property also suffers from illegal dumping, ATV use, and the poaching of plants and plant material.

Recommendations

Jones Lake State Park staff needs to meet with Resource Management staff and ensure that Jones Lake has a complete set of deeds and descriptions of the properties owned by the Division at Bushy Lake SNA. Park staff will then determine which boundaries may be located by park staff and which boundaries will need to be surveyed prior to marking. A surveyor should then be hired to locate all unknown corners and boundaries. Approximately 90% of the Bushy Lake boundaries are unknown to the park staff. In addition, the park should purchase a 90-horse power tractor with a fully enclosed safety cage, belly pan, and Brown's Tree Cutter type attachment. Equipment of this type will allow the park staff to efficiently demarcate the boundary without the extremely time consuming task of hand clearing the boundary corridor. This equipment will also be extremely helpful in resource management duties such as fire-line clearing, mechanical removal of shrubby and unwanted undergrowth, and preparing areas for reestablishment of eastern white cedar forest. The park will also need to obtain a 1.5-ton dump truck in order to facilitate the trailering and hauling of the equipment. The dump truck and tree cutter equipment could also be used at Lake Waccamaw and other nearby state park areas.

FURNISHINGS FOR THE PARK VISITOR'S CENTER

Background

Construction is currently underway on the Jones Lake State Park visitor's center and associated facilities. This project is constructing a basic visitor's center, which will include modern interpretive exhibits, an auditorium, classroom with wet lab capabilities, and administrative space. Other improvements addressed by this project include the construction of a bathhouse and refreshment stand, repairs to the existing park pier and boathouse, and repaving the day-use area parking lot. During North Carolina's recent budgetary shortfalls, \$100,000 that had been allocated to purchase furnishings for the visitor's center was remanded to the state. These funds had been intended to purchase items such as classroom tables, classroom chairs, auditorium chairs, bookshelves, audio-visual equipment, interpretive equipment, staff computers, etc. The park is currently without funding to furnish the visitor's center that is scheduled to open to the public in the spring of 2005.

Recommendations

Purchase furnishings and educational equipment that will allow the Jones Lake Visitor's Center to fulfill its intended mission. Miscellaneous visitor's center construction costs may provide a source of funds for furnishings and educational equipment. Construction staff will investigate this possibility.

NEED FOR A SAFETY ZONE ON GAME LANDS ABUTTING THE PARK

Background

Jones Lake State Park is almost entirely surrounded by state game lands. Many park facilities such as the organized group camp, the family campground, and hiking trails fall within just a few yards of the game lands. The vast majority of the property at Jones Lake State Park is unsuitable for development, hence facilities cannot be moved further into the interior of the state park. The game lands surrounding Jones Lake are only popular with hunters utilizing dogs and those who tend to be armed with shotguns. These hunters generally take quick shots at game that is being pursued by a pack of dogs. Consequently, the hunter must quickly acquire a target and make a determination as to whether to fire upon that target. This type of hunting is inherently dangerous for others who may be occupying the forest. Just this past hunting season, the windshield was shot out of a vehicle that was being operated on Sweet Home Church Road near the state park. Loud shots are often heard in the campgrounds, frightening park users and leading to numerous complaints. Frequently, hunting dogs venture into the park, upsetting and frightening park visitors and disrupting wildlife.

Recommendations

Negotiate with the Division of Forest Resources in order to establish 1000-foot safety zones around the state park's boundaries. Where possible, safety zone boundaries should be established along roadways, fire lines, and ditch lines to increase effectiveness and to facilitate placement and maintenance of signage. Because Turnbull Creek Educational State Forest is a safety zone, the Division of Forest Resources is obviously aware of the need to separate hunting from non-compatible other public uses.

CONSTRUCTION OF AN EQUIPMENT STORAGE BUILDING

Background

Jones Lake State Park has expensive mechanical equipment that must be stored in the open. It is exposed to the sun, wind, rain, dirt, and debris due to the lack of covered storage space. This equipment includes park tractors, fire fighting trucks and equipment, hydraulic implements, park boats, etc.

Recommendation

Construct a covered storage structure (pole shed) within the fenced area of the Jones Lake State Park maintenance area. A capital improvement project to construct an equipment storage shed/warehouse is included in Chapter VII.

COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

Background

Currently Jones Lake State Park has extremely poor communications capabilities. Radio contact with park units at Bushy Lake SNA is intermittent at best. There are no radio communications between Jones Lake and Bladen County law enforcement, other county emergency services, the Division of Forest Resources personnel, or the officers of the Wildlife Resources Commission. Jones Lake State Park and its sister park, Singletary Lake State Park, operate on two separate radio frequencies, making communications between the parks difficult. Jones Lake staff is unable to access the Singletary Lake repeater from Jones Lake. Currently, the default form of communication with outside agencies is cellular telephone. The Park Superintendent, Park Ranger III, and the BULA Ranger I have cellular phones. The other two rangers are generally without an efficient means of communication, especially when working closing shifts or weekends.

Recommendations

In the short term, continue to use the three cell phones to aid communication needs. The Division should contract with Bladen County to monitor Jones Lake and Singletary Lake traffic and to provide dispatch services for the law enforcement and emergency services function of the parks. If repeaters can be configured in such a manner as to allow both Jones Lake and Singletary Lake to run routine park radio traffic on one channel, the other channel could be monitored by Bladen dispatchers and only used by park staff for law enforcement and emergency services communications. In the past, the Bladen County Sheriff has been non-committal when asked about configuring his communications system to allow county dispatchers to access state park radio frequencies. The Division should pursue working with the county, perhaps offering a small payment for the county's assistance with communications.

PROPERTY NEEDS

Background

Jones Lake State Park has several small adjacent properties that have long been identified as needed for inclusion in the state park. Purchase of these properties would not only protect the watershed into Salter's Lake, but would move the park boundaries from bay forest to road frontage. Moving the boundary to the road frontage will facilitate better boundary marking, management and patrol.

Recommendation

Purchase the privately owned properties lying between Ruskin Road, Salter's Lake Trail, and Jones Lake State Park. These acquisitions should complete all property

needs at Jones Lake State Park. Land acquisition at Jones Lake is detailed in Chapter IX.

BUSHY LAKE STATE NATURAL AREA

The Division currently owns approximately 3,700 acres at Bushy Lake State Natural Area. Many additional tracts are being investigated for purchase by the park system. In the last couple of years, at least 700 acres have been added to Bushy Lake and as many as 5,000 acres will be added in the upcoming biennium. Properties historically being purchased at Bushy Lake are predominately wet pocosin and bay forest. Property owners are dividing tracts, keeping road frontage and residences, and selling the properties having little commercial or development use to the state. Problems arising from this practice include having boundaries that traverse extremely difficult habitat types and offer tenuous access to the state park properties. Often staff must travel through several private properties and cross numerous gates in order to access state park properties. The majority of the Bushy Lake properties are 25 to 30 miles from the operational center at Jones Lake. Patrols are sporadic and Bushy Lake suffers from heavy poaching, illegal ATV use, refuse dumping, etc.

Recommendation

Attempt to purchase properties at Bushy Lake State Natural Area with road frontage included. On tracts where immediate road access is impossible, ensure that deeded right-of-ways to properties are secured and that park staff are made aware of those right-of-ways. Purchase of an existing residence with the new properties to be added to Bushy Lake is likely to be preferable to construction of a new ranger residence there; if this is done, the capital improvement project to build a residence at Bushy Lake will be dropped. Placing a ranger residence at Bushy Lake State Natural Area will allow for a much increased presence in the area and will serve as a point of contact for park neighbors. Increased patrol opportunities and familiarity with the Bushy Lake State Natural Area, southern Cumberland County, and the neighboring landowners will lead to decreased violations of state park regulations.

Develop a management plan for Bushy Lake State Natural Area. This plan should address issues such as the need for a dedicated staff for Bushy Lake State Natural Area, the need for educational and administrative facilities at Bushy Lake, and the demand for basic visitor facilities such as restrooms and interpretive trails.

STAFFING NEEDS

Background

<u>Current Permanent Staff</u>	<u>Current Seasonal Staff (all 3 months)</u>
Park Superintendent II	General Utility Worker
Park Ranger III	2 Park Attendants
Park Ranger II	Peak Load Park Attendant
Park Ranger I	Peak Load Office Assistant II
Park Ranger I (BULA)	Bathhouse Manager
Maintenance Mechanic IV	Peak Load Bathhouse Clerk
Maintenance Mechanic II (BULA)	Chief Lifeguard
Office Assistant III	4 Lifeguards
	Peak Load Lifeguard

Jones Lake State Park generally has sufficient permanent staff to provide interpretation and educational duties, patrol and emergency response, and to offer basic recreational services at Jones Lake State Park. The park does not have enough permanent staff to address the enforcement needs at Bushy Lake State Natural Area or the basic resource management needs at either park. As previously discussed, two-thirds of the boundaries are not known nor are they marked. Clearing and maintaining boundaries in the thick, voracious bay vegetation found in these parks is extremely time consuming and manpower intensive. All habitats at Jones Lake and Bushy Lake are either fire dependant or fire tolerant. Due to the lack of controlled burning, the habitats that these parks are supposed to protect are degrading and becoming monotone pine woodland with a heavy, shrubby understory. The result is decreasing populations of herbaceous plants and reduced habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers, fox squirrels, Hessel's Hairstreak butterflies, etc. Due to current staffing levels and burn practices, the Jones Lake staff is only able to burn approximately 40 acres per year.

A visitor's center, bathhouse, refreshment stand, and other facilities are currently under construction at Jones Lake. Generally, construction of a visitor's center in a state park will also entail the establishment of administrative support, maintenance, and seasonal positions to assist with the operation, cleaning, and repair of the facilities. The office assistant, maintenance mechanic and seasonal positions which were to be established as part of the Jones Lake State Park Visitor's Center project were lost due to recent state budgetary shortfalls. As a result, appropriate staff will not be available to keep the visitors center open to the public seven days per week. If this situation is not remedied, Jones Lake will be forced to shift maintenance staff from their existing duties to cleaning and maintaining the visitor's center and bathhouse. This will result in inefficiencies regarding their existing duties and induce further delays in the maintenance project backlog facing the park.

In 2003, for the first time in over a decade, Jones Lake State Park offered refreshment items such as cold soft drinks, snack foods, and ice cream for sale during the summer

operational season. These items were sold by the bathhouse staff that also issue swimming passes and rent pedal boats and canoes. To operate the refreshment stand/bathhouse, Jones Lake has only one 40-hour per week seasonal bathhouse manager and a 16-hour per week bathhouse clerk. Daily, park rangers must assist with bathhouse operation during times of heavy use and cover lunch breaks and convenience breaks for the bathhouse staff.

Recommendations

Establish an equipment operator position to operate heavy equipment used in clearing and maintaining park boundaries, roadways, trails, and fire lines. This employee would also play an integral role in the park resource management program, removing unwanted vegetation and ladder fuels, preparing for and staffing controlled burns, and performing wildfire suppression duties. This individual would also remove nuisance beaver dams at Bushy Lake that flood private property and park roads. Eventually, this individual would become involved in efforts to block and fill old drainage ditches and to rehabilitate wetland habitats. Having this position to take a lead role in maintaining park boundaries and fire line preparation will allow ranger staff to further concentrate on interpretation and education duties and patrol efforts at Bushy Lake State Natural Area.

Establish an Office Assistant position in order to provide visitor contact and information and to enable the new visitor's center to remain open to the public seven days per week. This position should be established to coincide with completion of the visitor's center.

To assist with the new visitor's center and bathhouse upkeep, repairs, and cleaning, establish a maintenance mechanic position. A greatly expanded wastewater pumping and treatment system will require licensing not possessed by current JONE maintenance staff. This maintenance mechanic will need to obtain a subsurface wastewater operators license. This individual will also perform controlled burning activities, grounds keeping, automotive, and equipment maintenance duties.

To provide for operation of the park refreshment stand and bathhouse, establish a three-month refreshment stand clerk position. To allow boat rentals and refreshment stand sales on the weekends during the busy spring and fall months, create a 26-week peak load refreshment stand position. This employee would work April through October.

Extend the existing seasonal General Utility Worker position from three months to nine months. Currently, Jones Lake has no seasonal staff to assist with general park maintenance and custodial tasks during the busy spring and fall months. Expanding the tenure of this seasonal position will enable ranger staff to commit additional time to educational, patrol, and resource management duties.

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IX. LAND ACQUISITION

The main feature of Jones Lake State Park is the 224-acre Jones Lake, a water filled Carolina bay. The park also includes the nearby 315-acre Salters Lake. The Jones Lake State Park Dedicated Nature Preserve includes 1,218 acres of land plus both lakes. The dedicated natural heritage area has populations of several significant natural communities.

Several factors are considered in determining whether a piece of property should be included in an acquisition plan. These include: data from the Natural Heritage Program and the Division of Water Quality; the park's existing identified needs; and the Division staff's surveys of the properties. Threats to these properties can be development, logging, and sedimentation from upstream development as well as other forms of irreparable damage. Needs and threats are evaluated to determine what additional properties need to be added to the acquisition plan of the park.

CURRENT ACQUISITION STATUS

Jones Lake State Park contains 2,208 acres as of January 1, 2005. The primary focus of the park is the protection of the two Carolina bays and their natural communities.

FUTURE ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completion of the acquisition plan requires the acquisition of an additional 62 acres. The high priority acquisitions include parcels that lie between the existing park and Ruskin Road and Salters Lake Trail. These parcels will aid water quality protection for Salters Lake, remove adjacent incompatible land use, and aid boundary management.

ACQUISITION SUMMARY TABLE

Current size of the park (January 2005)	2208 acres
Additional identified land needs	<u>62 acres</u>
Total planned size of the park	2270 acres

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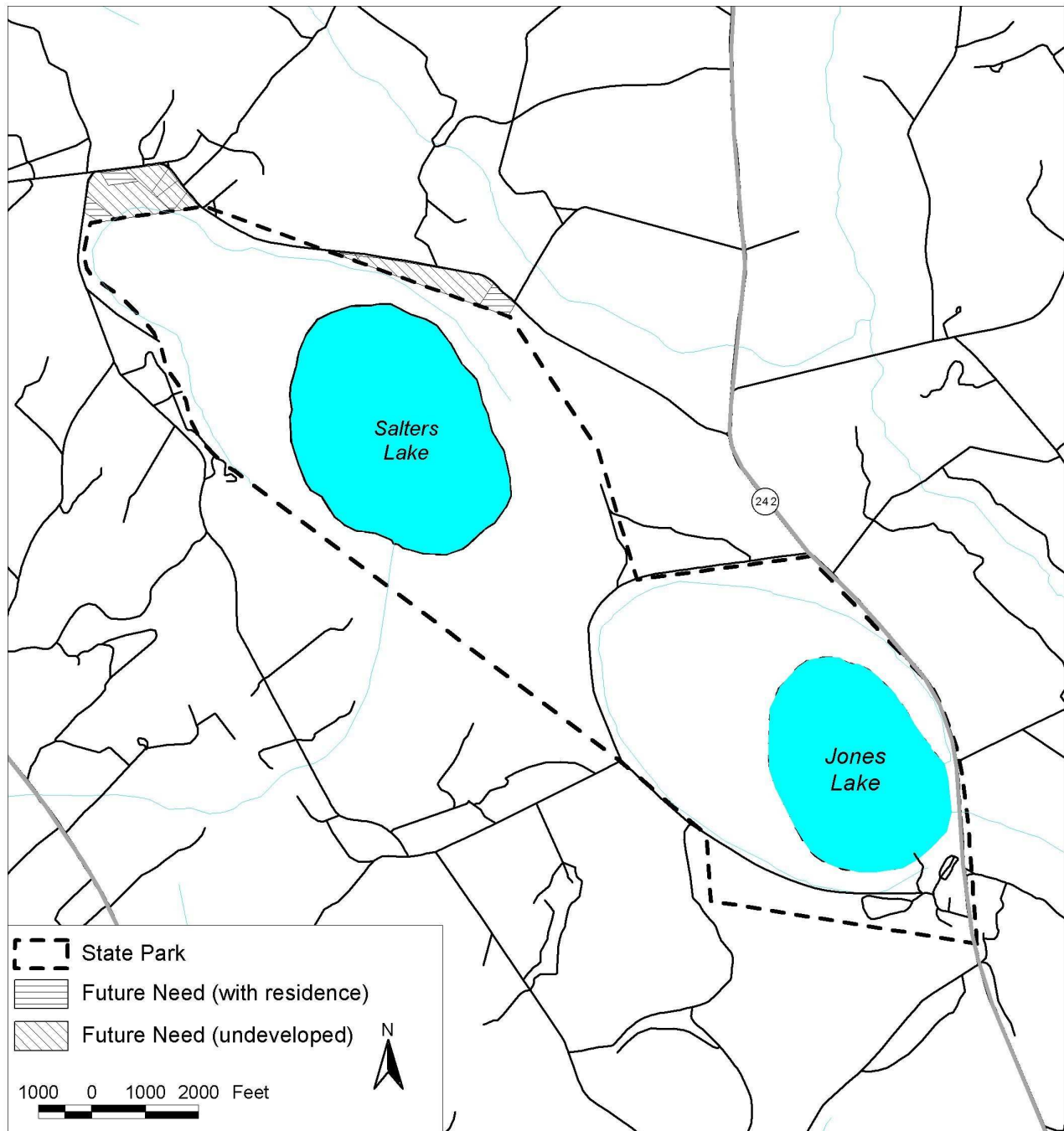


Figure IX-1. Jones Lake State Park Land Acquisition Needs